SAXON QUERNSTONES FROM TAMWORTH

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Fragment of a grey, fairly coarse, vesicular basaltic lava containing conspicuous dark phenocrysts of augite. Several similar pieces were noted in the storeroom of the Castle Museum, Tamworth, and four small pieces are on display together with two large quernstones of (?) Millstone Grit. The above sample was thin sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope. The most prominent minerals are frequent grains of green and colourless clinopyropyroxene, mainly augite, set in a groundmass of small lath-shaped crystals of andesine/labradorite felspar, epacite and some xenomorphic nepheline. The composition and character of the minerals is closely paralleled in the basaltic lavas of the Mayen-Niedermendig area of the Eifel region. The Tamworth lava quernstones undoubtedly originated from this part of Germany, as previously suggested by visual inspection (Rahtz and Sheridon, 1971). Ramsbury (Williams, 1980) and Northampton can be added to Parkhouse's (1977) distribution map of Mayen/Niedermendig lava quernstones in Saxon England.

References

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